Amateur Radio Newsline Report 1393 April 23, 2004

Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1393 with a release date of Friday, April 23rd, 2004 to follow in 5-4-3-2-1.

The following is a Q-S-T.

The FCC says its time to look at rebuilding ham radio and a big win for Radio Frequency I-D tagging. Find out the details on Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1393 coming your way right now.

(Billboard Cart Here)

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RESTRUCTURING: FCC HOUSECLEANING AND THE BEGINNING OF ROUND TWO

The FCC says its time to begin restructuring the Amateur Service for the 21st century and it has handed the nations ham radio community a 71 page start. Mark Abramowicz, NT3V, has looked it over and has the rest of the story:

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Actually, you might call this a bit of housecleaning because the bulk of the FCC's proposal stems from a number of petitions that have been sitting on desks and in drawers at the regulatory agency for months; some up to three years.

And, we should say up-front that this Notice of Proposed Rulemaking is separate from the latest license restructuring proposal put out for comment by the FCC a few weeks ago.

CQ Magazine Editor Rich Moseson W2VU, is focusing on this new FCC proposal in his "Zero Bias" editorial column for the magazine's June issue.

He tells me the centerpiece is what's known as the American Radio Relay League's "Novice Refarming" petition.

"A couple of years ago, the League filed a petition with the FCC saying: 'You're not issuing new Novice licenses anymore and that these band segments are not being well used. Let's expand the phone bands using some of these frequencies,' " Moseson explains.

Basically, Moseson says, the plan would expand code and data privileges for Novices and Technicians.

"And what they propose, basically, is giving Novices and Technicians with code credit access to the General CW portion of each of these three bands - 80, 40 and 15 and 10 meters as well. But CW only for them on 80, 40 and 15 and RTTY and Data on 10 meters. And then to take part of each of those Novice bands on 80, 40, and 15 and use them to expand the phone bands."

And, Moseson says there are also some big changes proposed for General, Advanced and Extra-class license holders.

"The big winners here are going to be General class hams," Moseson says. "They are going to get an extra 50 khz of phone band on 75 meters and on 40 meters and an extra 25 khz on 15 meters. Advanced and Extra class hams will also get additional space, 25 khz each on 75 and 40.

"But they're going to lose some of the exclusive areas that they have now. The exclusive Advanced class bands are going to be shrunk down by 25 khz or so.

"Of course, since there are no new Advanced class licenses being issued and since a lot of people have upgraded to General since the code-speed requirement was dropped to 5-words-a-minute, this may, indeed, be the right thing to do."

Again, Moseson stresses, this doesn't address the A-R-R-L's proposal to revive a Novice class license that would be a "no-code" ticket with HF privileges. And, he says, it has nothing to do with the raft of petitions on file at the commission to change the code requirements or add an entry level class by some other name.

Another big change in the FCC document centers on a proposal to legalize the sale and use of amplifiers for frequencies in the range of 24 to 35 Mhz.

Moseson says back in the mid-1970s, when Citizen Band radio operators were at the heart of interference complaints due to excessive use of power, the FCC banned the manufacture and sale of the amps that could be used on a wide scale that included 27 Mhz.

Well, Moseson says, that decision hurt the ham community then and causes unnecessary restrictions now.

"It hasn't really had any impact on CB because those people who want to have illegal amplifiers have had no problem continuing to get them," Moseson says. "And the hams who want to abide by the rules have not been able to use the power that's permitted to them on 12 meters and 10 meters.

"So the commission is proposing to do away with those restrictions and once again allow commercial manufacturers to make amplifiers that will amplify on 12 meters and 10 meters and to let you build as many as you want."

And finally, among the major elements, one allowing remote-control access to an HF transceiver using the 2-meter band. It would essentially legalize Kenwood's "Sky Command" system.

"They are now proposing to allow auxiliary operation on 2 meters considering the fact that the loading of the band in terms of actual use of repeaters etcetera is considerably less that it was 5 to 10 years ago," Moseson says.

"So it's not as likely to create interference problems and it's something that could become very important with the advent of things like BPL and more and more antenna restrictions that people may want to have an HF transceiver in a remote location that they cannot operate from home for whatever reason either the environment is poor for it or it is restricted and that they can use their VHF/UHF handheld or mobile rig to communicate back and forth with that remote transceiver."

Moseson says you can find more on-line at the FCC's website. He says copies of the June CQ with more of an explanation will be available at Dayton and in your mailbox or on newstands by mid-May.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Mark Abramowicz, NT3V, in Philadelphia.

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More on this FCC offering and reaction from the ham radio community in next weeks amateur Radio Newsline report. (ARNewsline(tm))

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ENFORCEMENT: SELL THOSE AMPS AND MAYBE GO TO JAIL

While the FCC says that it may eventually change the rules regarding the current prohibition on the sale of R-F power amplifiers capable of 10 and 12 meter operation, as of today they are still illegal. Anything marketed must be FCC certified and the agency has told a Texas businessman that he could go to jail if he does not stop selling some that are not. The FCC's Daryl Duckworth, NN0W, explains:

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Duckworth: "A warning notice went to Donald Hewitt, of Tomball, Texas. It stated that continued sale of non certified equipment would submit him to fine or imprisonment.

This case dates back to the Dayton Hamvention in 1999 involving the sale of WM-300 and WM-600 power amplifiers. We note that at his website these units are again for sale and that he has presented them for sale in the parking lot of the Houston Amateur Radio Supply and at the Smithville, Texas, hamfest this year."

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By way of background, Hewitt was issued an Official Notice of Violation of violation of Section 2.815 of the Commission's rules regarding manufacturing and marketing external radio frequency power amplifiers that operated below 144 Mhz. This, after he showed them at the 1999 Dayton Hamvention. He subsequently agreed to stop and the matter was dropped until it was brought to the FCC's attention that he again had them for sale. Now the FCC says that Hewitt had better cease offering the units or he could face time behind prison bars. (FCC, RAIN)

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THE BPL FIGHT: NC POWER COMPANY SAYS ITS LICKED INTERFERENCE

I'm Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, with late word on the B-P-L front where a North Carolina power company says that its licked the interference problem. Well almost.

In a letter to the FCC, Progress Energy claims it has solved almost all of the problems to the ham bands created by its test installation near the city of Raleigh. The company says that what remains is interference near the band edges that only affects mobile operators. It also says its still working to resolve this aspect.

Are the hams in the area satisfied? We will find out next week in a special in-depth report by Gay Pearce, KN4AQ. (ARNewsline(tm), KN4AQ)

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RADIO RULES: A WIN FOR RFID IN THE 70 CM BAND

The FCC has adopted a somewhat limited proposal to permit deployment of RF Identification or R-F-I-D tags on the 70-cm band. This, at much greater duty cycles than current Part 15 rules permit for such devices.

According to an ARRL bulletin, the Third Report and Order in ET Docket 01-278 which was approved April 15th follows a 2000 petition by SAVI Technology. This, to revise FCC Part 15 rules to accommodate such devices in the band from 433.5 to 434.5 Mhz, instead of the 425 to 435 Mhz SAVI originally asked for. It also prohibits operation of RFID tag systems within about 25 miles of five government radar sites and manufacturers of 433 Mhz R-F I-D systems would have to register the locations of their system base stations to aid in interference resolution.

The ARRL had opposed these changes but the FCC has gone along with it based mainly on national security reasons. Ed Thomas who is the Chief of the FCC's Office of Engineering and Technology said that these devices are designed to increase homeland security at ports, rail yards and warehouses. (ARRL)

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Break 1

From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline, heard on bulletin stations around the world including the W0BZN repeater serving Newton, Kansas.

(5 sec pause here)

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RADIO LAW: FCC EXPLORES RULES FOR DIGITAL AUDIO BROADCASTING

The Federal Communications Commission has taken another step toward

bringing digital radio services or D-A-B to American consumers. This, as it releases a Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making and companion Notice of Inquiry into changing the rules as part of the broader digital migration that is underway across all media.

Docket No. 99-325 released April 15th and its companion N-O-I seek comments on several topics relevant to D-A-B, including what changes and amendments to the FCC's technical rules are necessary to further its introduction. Specifically, sought are comments on proposals to allow AM nighttime digital service. The FCC also asks questions concerning digital's affect on FM translators. Questions regarding interference are also raised for comment.

Looking at the business side of radio, the FCC wants to know what types of digital services the it should permit stations to offer. Should a broadcaster be allowed to offer a high definition service, a multiplexed service, a datacasting service, or a combination of all of these possibilities? Comment is also sought on whether a radio station should be permitted to offer subscription services.

Comments on Docket No. 99-325 are due by June 16th and reply comments must be dated no later than July 16th. The FCC says that Digital audio broadcasting technology offers the possibility for enhanced sound quality, improved reception, and will offer the public new services such as datacasting along with music and news. (FCC, CGC)

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ENFORCEMENT: IGNORING THE FCC BRINGS $11,000 N-A-L

A Southern California ham who repeatedly ignored FCC warnings has now been told that he owes the government $11,000. Newsline's David Black, KB4KCH is here with more:

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The FCC slaps Daniel Granda, KA6VHC, with an 11-thousand dollar fine for what it says is willful and repeated interference. The Commission says it sent a warning notice by certified and regular mail to Granda in December, 2002 ... but the notice was later returned as unclaimed. The Commission says the letter it sent via regular mail was not returned.

Twice during January, 2003, the Commission sent follow-up warning notices, again, using certified and regular mail. Each of those times, the FCC says the certified mail was returned as unclaimed, while the notice sent by regular mail was not returned.

The fine goes back to a series of events beginning in November, 2002. That's when the Commission says it received a complaint that Granda was causing deliberate interference to two southern California repeaters. But the Commission and Granda had many more encounters. On March 6th, 2003, an FCC agent determined that Granda was retransmitting communications from 223-point-275 MHz onto the input of a repeater operating on 223-point-840 MHz. Just over two weeks later, authorities again caught Granda's station interfering with the same repeater.

The Commission's complaint cites more than half a dozen encounters with Granda. At times, investigators said Granda's station was transmitting signals from various 2 meter frequencies on to the 220 MHz repeater's input channel. In one incident agents using mobile direction finding techniques identified Granda's home as the source of an unidentified unmodulated carrier.

On April 15, 2003, the FCC says agents inspected Granda's equipment at his home in Whittier. The Commission says Granda orally admitted that he received several warning notices from the FCC. Investigators say Granda stated he was trying to prevent anyone from using quote--his--frequency by retransmitting other signals to keep the channel occupied.

Granda's ham license could be in jeopardy. That's because he's in trouble not just for alleged interference, but also for not responding to the FCC. The Commission notes that on three separate occasions, it sent notices to Granda, requiring responses, and that all three times, he failed to answer. That could set the way for the FCC to eventually order Granda to show cause why he shouldn't lose his amateur radio license.

From the Southeastern Bureau in Birmingham Alabama, I'm David Black, KB4KCH.

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Granda was given the normal 30 days to pay the fine or to file an appeal. (FCC)

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ENFORCEMENT: TO MANY CALL CHANGES

The FCC wants to know why a Maryland ham keeps changing his call sign. Again, the agency's Daryl Duckworth, NN0W:

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Duckworth: "Fredrick Davis, N3BO, of Emmetsburg Maryland has been asked about changing his call twelve times in nine different combinations nince November of 1999. In as much as each time a call sign is relinquished it is unavailable to anyone else for two years, these applications raise questions about apparent abuse of the licensing system."

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The FCC gave Davis the usual time to respond and he was not alone. A similar notice went out to Thomas Eifert of Greendale, Wisconsin, concerning his switching between NI7V and N9IX. Also hearing from the FCC was William Mc Doniel of Garden Grove, California, was told to explain the six applications he has filed applications involving call sign switches between N6BM and N4EA. (FCC, RAIN)

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ENFORCEMENT: CHICAGO DJ SUES LISTENER OVER COMPLAINTS

The Chicago Sun-Times reports a new twist to the indecent language war that's pitting air talent against the FCC, and now, against listeners as well. According to the paper, WKQX morning host Mancow Muller is suing David Edward Smith for complaining about him to the regulatory agency.

According to Muller's complaint, Smith has filed numerous complaints against the jock. This has resulted in $42,000 worth of files being issued by the FCC.

Muller's $3 million lawsuit charges Smith and the watch-dog group Citizens for Community Values with business interference and filing "spurious complaints" that are "repetitive, malicious, untrue and designed merely for the purpose of harassment."

So far, Smith has filed 66 complaints against Muller. If he should win his suit, Muller says that any profit will be donated to the Boy Scouts of America and various other charities. (Published news reports)

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EMERGING TECHNOLOGY: HIGH SPEED INTERNET ACCESS GROWING

Two in five Internet users in the United States now have high-speed Internet access at home. This, as telephone companies slash prices to better compete with cable broadband services, a study says.

A report by the Pew Internet and American Life Project says that most of the growth has been since November from D-S-L phone connections. They now make up 42 percent of the entire home broadband market. That's up from 28 percent in March 2003.

Cable modems still have the lead. Their market share is 54 percent, but they no longer enjoy a 2-to-1 edge.

Although dial-up remains a lot less expensive than high speed access, John Horrigan, Pew's senior research specialist, said Americans are increasingly making a time is money" calculation. If they are spending more time online, they find savings from high-speed connections even if they must pay a little more.

According to the study, 36 percent of home broadband users said they switched because their dial-up connection was too slow or frustrating. Twenty-one percent said they wanted to download files faster, and 10 percent needed it for job-related tasks.

Pew places the adult residential broadband population at 48 million, or one-quarter of all adult Americans.   Among college educated adults age 35 and younger, broadband penetration has now reached 52 percent. (Press release)

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NEW THECHNOLGY: A CELL PHONE WITH WORLDWIDE CAPABILITY

A cell phone that can be used most places in the world will be offered by Motorola during the second half of this year. The handset is compatible with the GSM networks used throughout Europe, as well as the CDMA standard that is popular in the United States and across Asia. More is on-line at http://tinyurl.com/3bqh5 (CGC)

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HAMFESTS & CONVENTIONS: VISTA AZ. IN MAY

On the ham radio social scene, word that the Cochise Amateur Radio Club will be holding its 2004 hamfest on Saturday, May the 1st in Vista Arizona. All the information on this one is on-line at www.qsl.net/k7rdg or by e-mail to kd7hab@netzero.net

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HAMVENTION 2004: AWARDS WITH PRIZES ON SUNDAY

The planners of the 2004 Dayton Hamvention say that they have a unique new way to present this years Hamvention awards. This, as part of an expanded prize drawing on Sunday afternoon, May 16th.

As in years past, at the close of business hours on Sunday attendees will be directed to the 7000 seats in the grandstands in the main arena for the drawing of the remaining hourly prizes and the big grand prizes. But before the first numbers get pulled the crowd will get a chance to meet the three Hamvention award winners, find out why they were chosen and get to be a part of this very special award presentation ceremony.

As previously reported, this years winners are Barry Sanderson, KB9VAK, whose getting the "Technical Excellence Award," George Wilson, W4OYI, who is the "Special Achievement Award" winner and David Kopacz, KY1V, named as "Radio Amateur of the Year." They will be joined by the President of the Dayton Amateur Radio Association and members of the Hamvention planning committee to make this a special afternoon for the winners and everyone else on hand. (Hamvention(r))

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BREAK 2

This is ham radio news for today's radio amateur. From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline with links to the world from our only official website at www.arnewsline.org and being relayed by the volunteer services of the following radio amateur:

(5 sec pause here)

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NEW PUBLICATIONS: HAM RADIO FOR DUMMIES

We've all seen those great yellow covered books that have been introducing the public to the world of computers for close to two decades. Books like DOS For Dummies, Windows For Dummies, Excel For Dummies and the rest. And how often have you wished out loud for a book titled Ham Radio For Dummies. You know. A book that you could hand to the next guy who confuses your 70 foot tower and Tri-Bander with a C-B set to talk to Smokey and the Bandit.

Well now you can, but you may want to read it first because author Ward Silver, N0ZAX, has come up with what may well be the best explanation of the hobby ever written:

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Silver: "I get a lot of people who come up and say -- `hey I bet you get goof TV reception' -- or that sort of thing. So I go into my 5 minute spiel about what ham radio is. And at some point you can sense that they are kind of glazing over a little bit.

But the familiar yellow and black cover and the brand helps to take the mystique out of buying the book. It makes something that they are familiar with so that they are comfortable in giving it a try."

the experts expert: Joe Moell, KO0V:
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Last time I told you about foxhunting -- that's tracking radio transmitters for sport with direction-finding equipment -- and the upcoming USA Championships of foxhunting, which will take place in southern California beginning June 16. Perhaps you would like to attend, but you want to get some practice first. And wouldn't it be great if there were more foxhunting activity in your home town? Well, that's why you should get your local ham club involved in this fantastic form of radio competition, and the National Foxhunting Weekend is the time to do it.

CQ Magazine sponsors the National Foxhunting Weekend each spring. The seventh annual event will be May 8 and 9, 2004. The rules are very loose. Actually, there really aren't any rules, just the suggestion that your club hold some kind of foxhunt on that weekend, or close to it. An on-foot event in the park, perhaps with a barbecue at the end, would be great fun for families. Or you could hold a more traditional kind of hunt, with the competitors in their cars and the hider in an unlikely spot, miles away. Scoring on a mobile hunt can be by time -- who finds it first -- or by least

odometer mileage, making it more like a road rallye.

If your club isn't already planning a National Foxhunting Weekend hunt, it's up to YOU to start the fun. Get some ideas by reading the tales of last years hunts in the April issue of CQ Magazine. Report forms and more information can be found at my Web site, www.homingin.com. That's HomingIn, as one word, homingin.com. See you on the hunt! From southern California, this is Joe Moell Kay-Zero-Oscar-Victor for Amateur Radio Newsline.

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Radio Fox Hunts are a lot of fun and many of the Newsline staffers around the world enjoy taking part in them.

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NEWSCAST CLOSE

With thanks to Alan Labs, AMSAT, the ARRL, the CGC Communicator, CQ Magazine, the FCC, the Ohio Penn DX Bulletin, Radio Netherlands, Rain, the RSGB and Australia's Q-News, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline(tm). Our e-mail address is newsline @arnewsline.org. More information is available at Amateur Radio Newsline's(tm) only official website located at www.arnewsline.org. You can also write to us or support us at Amateur Radio Newsline(tm), P.O. Box 660937, Arcadia, California 91066.

A reminder that the nominating period for the 2004 Amateur Radio Newsline Young Ham of the Year Award is now on. This program is open to any FCC licensed young radio amateur age 18 or younger residing in the contiguous 48 states and who has made a significant contribution to the community, the nation or ham radio though the United States Amateur Radio Service.

More information and a downloadable on-line nominating form is at our website. That's in cyberspace at www.arnewsline.org. The cutoff for nominations this year is midnight on Tuesday, June 31st.

For now, with Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, at the editors desk, I'm Jim Davis, W2JKD, saying 73 and we thank you for listening." Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) is Copyright 2004. All rights reserved.